

**The
Somonours
Tale**

Upon the nave, and make hym lete a fart.
And ye shul seen, up peril of my lyf,
By preeve which that is demonstratif,
That equally the soun of it wol wende,
And eek the stynk, unto the spokes ende;
Save that this worthy man, your confessour,
Bycause he is a man of greet honour,
Shal have the firste fruyt, as resoun is.
The noble usage of freres yet is this,
The worthy men of hem shul first be served;
And certainly, he hath it weel deserved.
He hath today taught us so muchel good
With prechyng in the pulpit ther he stood,
That I may vouchesauf, I sey for me,
He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,
And so wolde al his covent hardily;
He bereth hym so faire and hoolily.

THE lord, the lady, and alle men save the frere,
Seyde that Jankyn spak, in this matere,
As wel as Euclide, or Protholomee,
Touchyng this chert; they seyde subtiltee
And heigh wit made hym speken as he spak;
He nys no fool, ne no demonyak;
And Jankyn hath ywonne a newe gowne.
My tale is doon; we been almoost at towne.

Heere endeth the Somonours Tale.

**Heere folweth the prologe of the Clerkes Tale of
Oxenford.**



PERE Clerk of Oxenford, oure
hooste sayde,
Ye ryde as coy and stille as
dooth a mayde,
Were newe spoused, sit-
tyng at the bord;
This day ne herde I of youre
tonge a word.
Itrowe ye studie aboute som
sophyme;

But Salomon seith, Every thyng hath tyme.
for Goddes sake, as beth of bettre cheere,
It is no tyme for to studien heere.
Telle us some myrie tale, by youre fey;
for what man that is entred in a pley,
He nedes moot unto the pley assente.
But precheth nat, as freres doon in lente,

To make us for oure olde synnes wepe,
Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe.
Telle us som murie thyng of aventures;
Youre termes, youre colours, and youre figures,
Keepe hem in stoor til so be ye endite
Heigh style, as whan that men to kynges write.
Speketh so pleyne at this tyme, we yow preye,
That we may understonde what ye seye.

THIS worthy clerk benignely answerde,
Hooste, quod he, I am under youre yerde;
Ye han of us, as now, the governance,
And therfore wol I do yow obeisance
As fer as resoun axeth, hardily.
I wol yow telle a tale which that I
Lerned at Padwe of a worthy clerk,
As preved by his wordes and his werk.
He is now deed and nayled in his cheste,
I prey to God so yeve his soule reste!

PRANCEYS PETRAK, the lauriat
poete,

Highte this clerk, whos rethorike sweete
Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie,
As Lynyan dide of philosophie
Or lawe, or oother art particuler;
But deeth, that wol nat suffre us dwellen heer
But as it were a twynklyng of an eye,
Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shul we dye.
But forth to tellen of this worthy man
That taughte me this tale, as I bigan,
I seye that first with heigh stile he enditeth.
Er he the body of his tale writeth,
A proheme, in the which discryveth he
Demond, and of Saluces the contree;
And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye
That been the boundes of West Lumbardye,
And of Mount Vesulus in special,
Whereas the Doo, out of a welle smal,
Taketh his firste spryngyng and his sours,
That estward ay encresseth in his cours
To Emeleward, to ferrare and Venyse:
The which a long thyng were to devyse.
And trewely, as to my juggement,
Me thynketh it a thyng impertinent,
Save that he wole conveyen his matere:
But this his tale, which that ye may heere.

Here endith the Clerke of Oxenford his prologe.

**HEERE BIGYNNETH THE TALE OF THE CLERK
OF OXENFORD PRIMA PARS**



PIS, AT THE WEST SYDE OF YTAILLE,
Doun at the roote of Vesulus the colde,
A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,
Where many a tour & toun thou mayst biholde,
That founded were in time of fadres olde,
And many another delitable sighte,
And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markys whilom lord was of that lond,
As were his worthy eldres hym bifore;
And obeisant and redy to his honde
Were alle his liges, bothe lasse and moore.
Thus in delit he lyveth, and hath doon yore,
Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
Bothe of his lordes and of his commune.

Therwith he was, to speke as of lynage,
The gentilleste yborn of Lumbardye;
A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curteisye;
Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye,
Save in somme thynges that he was to blame,
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

BLAME him thus, that he considereth
nogh
In tyme comyng what hym myghte
bityde;
But in his lust present was al his thought.
As for to hauke and hunte on every syde;
Wel ny alle othere cures leet he styde;
And eek he nolde, and that was worst of alle,
Wedde no wyf, for nogh that may bifalle.

Only that point his peple bar so soore,